

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/893,522
Amendment dated April 25, 2005
Reply to OA of **January 25, 2005**

REMARKS:

Claims 1-28 are currently pending. Claims 1-4, 7, 8, 15, 16, and 23-28 are currently being considered, of which claim 1 has been amended and claims 23-28 have been newly added. Applicants believe that no new matter has been introduced.

Before turning to the cited art, a brief review of the present invention is in order. The present invention relates to a fluid control device wherein a line supporting rail is mounted on a base member and is slidable in a direction orthogonal to a line along at least one orthogonal rail, wherein coupling members are arranged at a lower level and are slidably mounted on a rail, each fluid controller being mounted on two of the coupling members.

Claims 1 and 16/1 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as anticipated by USP 6,394,138 (**Vu**).

Claims 3 and 16/3 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as anticipated by USP 6,502,601 (**Eidsmore**).

Claims 2, 4, 7, 8, and 15 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as obvious over **Vu** in view of USP 6,076,543 (**Johnson**).

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Applicants respectfully traverse the above rejections.

As shown in Figure A below, in accordance with the principles of the present invention, when fluid controller (A) is to be replaced by one (A') which is different in dimension (in length along the rail), the present invention has an advantageous effect that the fluid controllers are replaceable by slidingly moving the coupling members (B) (C) along the rail, without necessitating replacement of the coupling members (B) (C). These aspects of the present invention are disclosed by the original disclosure. Figure A is included herein to facilitate discussion of some of the advantages provided by the present invention.

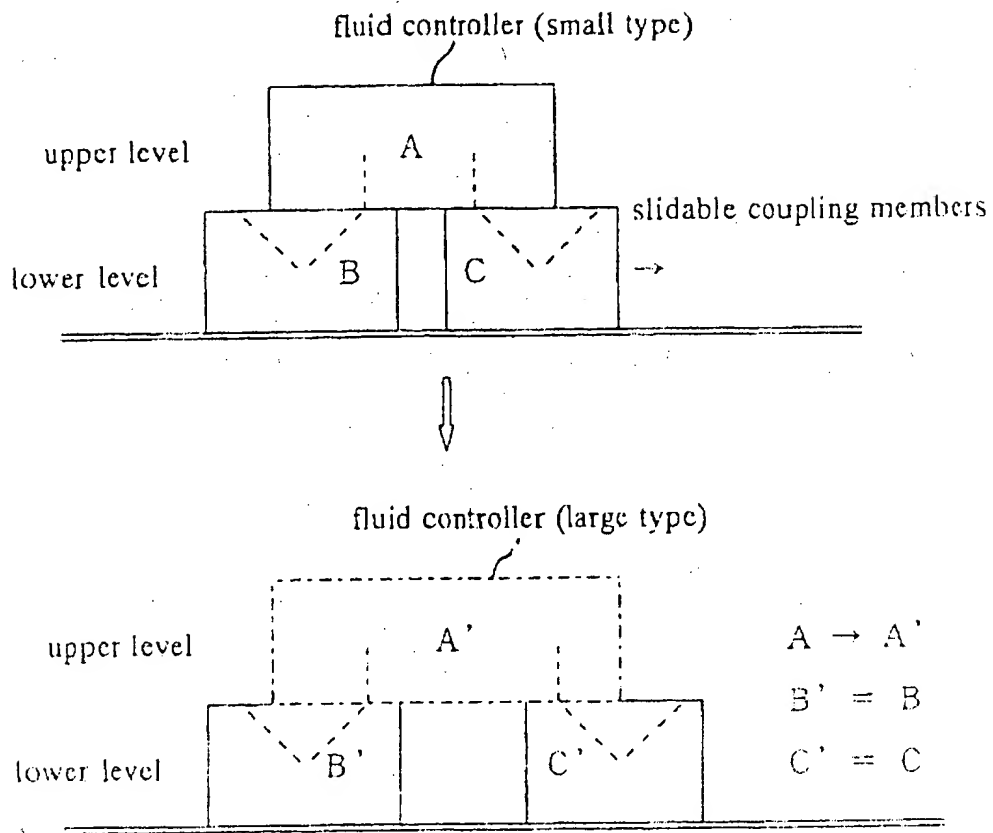


FIGURE A

In **Johnson**, "fitting 62" and "a mounting block 57" do not correspond to the coupling members in the present invention. Further, in **Vu**, the components that slidingly move are "mounting brackets 236, 238", and there is no description about slidably mounting the coupling members. Furthermore, in **Eidsmore**, "fitting 50" does not slidingly move along the rail.

In the end, none of the references disclose that coupling members arranged at a lower level are slidably mounted on the rail and that each of the fluid controllers are mounted on two of the coupling members.

Vu, Eidsmore, and Johnson, alone or in combination, fail to describe, teach, or suggest the following features of claim 1, as amended: "the fluid control device being characterized in that the base member has at least one orthogonal rail extending in a direction orthogonal to the line and each line is mounted on a line supporting rail, the line supporting rail being mounted on the base member and slidable in a direction orthogonal to the line along the at least one orthogonal rail", in combination with the other claimed features.

Vu, Eidsmore, and Johnson, alone or in combination, fail to describe, teach, or suggest the following features of claim 2: "a plurality of coupling members arranged at a lower level, ... the coupling members are slidably mounted on the rail, each of the fluid controllers being mounted on two of the coupling members", in combination with the other claimed features.

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Vu, Eidsmore, and Johnson, alone or in combination, fail to describe, teach, or suggest the following features of claim 3 and 4: “a plurality of coupling members arranged at a lower level, ... the coupling members being slidably mounted on the corresponding track, each of the fluid controllers being mounted on two of the coupling members”, in combination with the other features.

Claims 23-28 have been newly added. Applicants have presented these additional claims to alternatively and more completely define Applicants' invention and thereby assist the Examiner by facilitating the speedy and compact prosecution of the present invention.

Although the Office Action mailed January 25, 2005 did not address these claims 23-28, not hitherto available to the Examiner, Applicants desire to make a record as to why **Vu, Eidsmore, and Johnson**, alone or in combination, do not describe, teach, or suggest the combination of features set forth in claims 23-28, and desire to indicate why claims 23-28 are allowable over those references.

Vu, Eidsmore, and Johnson, alone or in combination, do not describe, teach, or suggest the following features of claim 23: “the line support member comprises two shape members each having a groove and being arranged side by side, each of the shape members forms the groove between two inward flanges, the groove has a downwardly tapered trapezoidal cross section, and

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a slide member having a downwardly tapered trapezoidal cross section and a vertical internally threaded portion is provided in the line support member and is connected to one of the coupling members by a screw member”, in combination with the other claimed features.

Vu, Eidsmore, and Johnson, alone or in combination, do not describe, teach, or suggest the following features of claim 24: “the rail comprises two shape members each having a groove and being arranged side by side, each of the shape members forms the groove between two inward flanges, the groove has a downwardly tapered trapezoidal cross section, and a slide member has a downwardly tapered trapezoidal cross section and a vertical internally threaded portion is provided in the rail and is connected to one of the coupling members by a screw member”, in combination with the other claimed features.

Vu, Eidsmore, and Johnson, alone or in combination, do not describe, teach, or suggest the following features of claim 25: “each one of the tracks comprises two shape members each having a groove and being arranged side by side, each of the shape members forms the groove between two inward flanges, the groove has a downwardly tapered trapezoidal cross section, and a slide member having a downwardly tapered trapezoidal cross section and a vertical internally threaded portion is provided in the track and is connected to one of the coupling members by a screw member”, in combination with the other claimed features.

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Vu, Eidsmore, and Johnson, alone or in combination, do not describe, teach, or suggest the following features of claim 26: “each one of the tracks comprises two shape members each having a groove and being arranged side by side, each of the shape members forms the groove between two inward flanges, the groove has a downwardly tapered trapezoidal cross section, and each of the slide members has a downwardly tapered trapezoidal cross section and a vertical internally threaded portion and is provided in the track”, in combination with the other claimed features.

Vu, Eidsmore, and Johnson, alone or in combination, do not describe, teach, or suggest the following features of claims 27 and 28: “the slide member has an axial length smaller than end-to-end distance between the inward flanges of each of the shape members”, in combination with the other claimed features.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 23-28 are allowable over **Vu, Eidsmore, and Johnson**.

In view of the aforementioned remarks and amendments, it is respectfully submitted that all claims currently being considered are in condition for allowance, which action, at an early date, is requested.

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If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for a telephone conference to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,
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Enclosures: Amendment Transmittal